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Dr. FULLER's

Exhortation-Sermon

AT

TEVENAGE.

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DE FILLERS
Bibliothèque Sermon



A
S E R M O N

Preached at the
Triennial Visitation

Of the Right Reverend,

J A M E S,

Lord Bishop of LINCOLN,

Held at

S T E V E N A G E,

August the 6th. 1703.

By THOMAS FULLER, D. D. Rector of
Bishops-Hatfield in the County of *Hertford*.

L O N D O N,

Printed by J. H. for Henry Mortlock, at the Sign of the
Phoenix, in St. Paul's Church-Yard, 1703.

S E R M O N

Trichinial Veneration

Of the Right Reverend

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Lord Bishop of Lincoln

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THOMAS BISHOP OF LINCOLN

L O N D O N

Printed by J. Moxon, at the Sign of the
Printer, in St. Paul's Church-Yard, 1703.

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PHIL. I. 27,†28.

Only let your Conversation be as becometh the Gospel of Christ: That whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your Affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the Faith of the Gospel.

And in nothing terrified by your Adversaries. ---

THE great Care and Solitude which this holy and eminent Apostle doth here exprefs for those he had converted to the Christian Faith, and were under his Charge, being at all Times fit to be considered by Us who are God's Ministers, and have the Care of Souls; I have therefore now made choice of these words containing such weighty Advice, to insist upon, when we of the Clergy are in so solemn a manner met together by the Command of our Right Reverend Bishop, who in Eminence of Order, Dignity, and Superiority, is, by God's Providence, set over us.

And as there were among the *Philippians* when *St. Paul* wrote to them, many dangerous Enemies to the Christian Faith, who were indefatigable

gable for its Ruin and Subversion ; so have we now many such, who with great Application labour to undermine the very Fundamentals of it, and in most important Articles have corrupted it. So that what was then of so sensible a Concern to the Apostle, ought to be equally so to us now, to whom *the word of Truth and Reconciliation in and through Christ Jesus is committed.*

St. Paul, when he wrote this Epistle was in Bonds for the Gospel : Yet in this juncture, so difficult and hazardous, both to himself and them also, who were in such danger of being seduced, he could not but inculcate what he had said for the confirming them in the Truth of their Religion, and do what in him lay, so to prepare them for the Sufferings to which they were exposed, that in the *Day of Trial and Temptation*, they might be proof against all the Wiles and Designs of their Enemies. For he declares, that it was only for theirs and the Gospel's sake, in order to their better Settlement, and with hopes to see them again that he desired to live, and such a Degree of Christian Love doth he express for them, that all he wished for, to compleat his Joy, was that they might be stedfast in the Faith, and his Labours among them might not be in vain ; and not knowing how things might fall out, either

for the obtaining his Liberty, or his seeing them again, as he hop'd and design'd, he in the mean time sends them this most excellent Advice, saying, as in the words of my Text :

Only, &c.

Which is as much as if he had said----The main and principal Thing I require of you, as most absolutely necessary, and of greatest Excellency, is, that ye lead Holy Lives, such as become the Dignity of the Gospel, and are answerable to your Holy Calling and Profession ; that whether I be present or absent, at all Times, and upon all Occasions, I may have a comfortable Account of your Affairs, and hear that ye do these things which are so necessary for the Support and Preservation of the Church. Which farther are, *That ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind ;* that is, that being firmly perswaded of the Truth of what ye profess, ye have the same kind Affections one for another, and be very unanimous in the Profession of it, *and that striving together for the Faith of the Gospel,* being very zealous and industrious for the Propagation and Advancement of it, *and that being in nothing terrified by your Adversaries,* ye be stout and courageous in its Defence, not being dejected or dismayed by all the Threats or Persecutions, which

which upon that Account ye may suffer or undergo.

And do we but consider these things, and give them their due weight, we cannot but think that this was most useful Advice; and that the means prescribed must very much contribute to obtain the End proposed.

Therefore in speaking to these words, I shall press the things contain'd in them upon our Observance, as of great Use, and what will tend to the Support and Maintenance of that Faith which is so perfectly taught in our own Church, whereof we have all the Honour and Happiness to be Ministers and Members; and in the prosecution of my Discourse on them, I shall do these four Things, and shew (in order to such an excellent End)

1. The Necessity of an holy Conversation, and such a Course of Life as becomes the Dignity of the Gospel.

2. Of a sincere Love, Concord and Union among those who profess the same Faith, and are Members of the same Church.

3. Of Zeal and Industry in the Defence and Propagation of the true Faith. And,

4. Of Courage and Resolution against all the Enemies and Opposers of it.

All

All which when I have somewhat illustrated and confirmed, shall I sum up with some useful Application suitable for our selves, and the present Occasion.

As to the first of these, *Holiness*, or such a Conversation as becomes the Gospel of Christ; it is a necessary and important Duty, incumbent on all Christians; and that wherein the very Life and Essence of all Religion does consist; and therefore was it, that Christians were by special Designation to become a *peculiar People*, and for this End were separated from the rest of the World, that they might be *zealous of good works*, striving by their Fervency and Diligence to adorn the Doctrine of the Gospel, and their holy Profession; and as it always was, so is it still reckoned to the Honour of those who are Members of any Society, to live up to the Rules and Orders of it; and when any who profess to believe the Gospel, do frame their Conversations according to the Laws and Institutions of it, both in reference to God and Man, they must be said to be holy, and to live as becomes the Dignity of it; for by our Conformity to the Divine Will therein revealed, all Sanctity and Goodness being to be measured; great reason is there, that all the professors of Religion should have great

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regard

6 *A Visitation-Sermon, preached*

regard to the Decency and Congruity of their Actions, and consider how agreeable they are to that which they propose as their Rule and End: For so is it through Men's unreasonable Prejudices, and their being hardened by their corrupt Lusts against the ways of God; that they *do* and *will* judge of the Goodness or Badness of Religion from the Lives of its Professors: Therefore all habitual Wickednesses, or scandalous Offences in Christians do great mischief, as they cause great prejudices against true Religion; as they rob God of his Honour; and expose his whole Church to shame and reproach. And that it always was as it now is, is plain from St. Paul

Rom. 2. 4. who saith, that *from the licentiousness of the Jews who pretended to be dear to God, his Name was blasphemed among the Gentiles.* And this double was an aggravation of David's Sin in the matter of Uriah, that he gave occasion to the Enemies of God to blaspheme, or the way of truth to be evil-spoken of: And from this Topick had Nehemiah's Argument great force to perswade the Jews to true Religion in the power and practice of

Neh. 5. 9. Ought ye not, saith he, to walk in the Fear of God because of the reproach of the Heathen our Enemies. And for this very Reason that the Word of God

Tit. 2. 3. not blasphemed, doth St. Paul exhort, that their

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behaviour be as becometh holiness; and upon the same Account is it, that St. Peter tells them, *that their* 1 Pet. 2. 12. *Conversation ought to be honest among the Gentiles; that whereas they are apt to speak against them as evil-doers, they might by their good Works which they should behold, be brought to glorifie God in the Day of Visitation; and the Honour and Credit of the Gospel doth St. Paul use as a grand Motive to call them to Holiness; I beseech you, saith he, walk worthy* Eph. 4. 1. *of the Vocation to which you are called, and in the 5th Chapter, v. 8. walk as Children of the Light, and as becometh Saints, v. 3. which is correspondent to this his Admonition in the Text, That our Conversation be as becometh the Dignity of the Gospel of Christ: So that this, That they would walk worthy of the Lord, and as becomes the Gospel of Christ, was the first and principal thing he required of them; and unless there was in them such an inward Principle of Goodness, and a suitable practice in their Lives, they neither could, nor would answer his Desires, or Expectations from them, or do those other things, which he here propounds for the preservation of the Church he had planted among them: Another of which; That they should stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, is comprised in my second particular, that there be sincere Love, Concord, and Union a-*

mong those who profess the same Faith, and are Members of the same Church.

And this is indeed, as we must all own, an admirable means for the welfare of any Church or Society whatever; and what St. Paul in his great Wisdom does lay so great a stress upon, is agreeable to all Men's observation; that there is nothing like Love and Amity, Unity and Concord for accomplishing the Ends and Designs of Religion; and it is not only, as David saith, *A*
 Pf. 133. 1. *good and pleasant thing for brethren to live together in*
Unity, but it is also every way for their Advantage and Security. For if there once be Divisions, and a Breach made upon Peace or Order, then will that Union which should be kept firm and inviolable be soon dissolved; for no more can a Church, than a Kingdom or House divided among themselves stand. And obvious enough is it to every Man that is conversant in History, that many Empires and States, which have been otherwise seemingly invincible, have through intestine Quarrels and Divisions, been brought entirely to Ruine; and most true is this, of the great and once flourishing Roman Empire, that it never suffered so much from the most formidable force of all its Enemies, as it did from their civil Broils and Dissentions. And too many Instances

stances of this kind are there upon Record in Ecclesiastical Story, which shew the fatal Mischief of Church Divisions; and that the Breaches made in them could never be repair'd, nor their Divisions ended but with the Ruine of the Churches. And so *must* it be in all Societies, whether Civil or Religious, that where there is Discord and Animosity, there will quickly be Destruction; and this from the Nature of the thing is even unavoidable; for when once mutual Love and Confidence is broken, when Men are fallen into Parties, and into a State of Wrath and Enmity, then are their true and common Interests neglected, and they cannot enter upon any Measures or Counsels, which are either for their Honour or Safety: For being under the Conduct of their Passions; and those, from their Strifes and Emulations in a great Ferment; *there is Confusion and every evil Work.* And nothing is there that can be so fatal to the Interests of any Church, or of true Religion, as such Unchristian Differences and Dissentions; for then is entirely lost, all Sense of the Evil of Schism and Separation; and neither the Unity of that Body whereof they are Members, nor of that Spirit by which they are governed, nor of that hope to which they are called, nor of that God whom they all worship
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and serve, nor of that Faith they profess, nor of that Baptism by which they are initiated into the Privileges or Advantages of it, will be of any force, to make them maintain that Peace and Order, that Love and Charity, which are the distinguishing Marks of true Religion. So that instead of being a mutual Relief and Succour, a Defence and Security to one another, they become an easie Prey unto their Enemies, who will always rejoyce in their Weakness and Follies, and be sure to make their advantages of them. And the Evil and Folly of those and such like Contentions as were among the *Galatians*, as most dangerous to them doth St. Paul represent, when he saith, *if ye bite and devour one another, take heed, that ye be not consumed one of another.* And seldom or never doth it fall out, but that one is the Consequence of the other: For if there be Quarrels and Hatreds, and Men run into Sects and Factions they are commonly managed with such Fury and Animosity as is to the Ruin of them all. So that as Men value their Happiness and Welfare, they should, when incorporated into one and the same Society, do all they can, that Peace and Love, Charity and Good-will, and such an Union be preserved among them, as Religion upon the highest Sanctions obliges them to; alway re-
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membring, that Agreement and Unanimity are not only their Glory and Ornament, but the best Means of their Safety and Preservation; and on us, thus united in one Heart, and with one Mind, as Members of the same Church, and under the Influence of the same common Government, is it a Duty incumbent to strive together for the Faith of the Gospel; which is the

Third thing here proposed; That there be Zeal and Industry in the Defence and Propagation of the true Faith. Ever since the beginning of our Religion, and its first appearance in the World the true Faith has had many Enemies, who in different ways and manners have opposed it; and by joint Endeavours, though upon different Accounts, did both the *Jews* and *Gentiles* what they could to extinguish and root it out; and at no time or age since has it fared much better: There having alway been wicked and designing Men, who upon one pretence or other, have been implacable Adversaries to it; and very early in the first and purest Times, were there such Christians, who by corrupting its Purity, did it more mischief than its greatest Enemies could have done. In the Times of the Apostles themselves was there a great Apostacy carried on by false Prophets and false Christs, but most especially among the *Jews*:
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To stop the progress of which, was St. Paul's principal Design in writing his Epistle to the *Hebrews*; and that there were deceitful Workers, who carried on this Work in hypocrisie, esteeming Gain Godliness, doth this Apostle often tell us, as (2 Cor. 2. 17.) he calls them *corrupters of the word*, and Titus 1. 15. *such Men whose Consciences are defiled*: With such and many others of this kind was the Church infested in those pure and primitive Times. And so long did St. John the Apostle and Evangelist live, as to see the fundamental Article of our Saviour's Divinity, to be by some bold Hereticks denied; the proof of which, with the Confutation of them, 'tis plain he had in his view, when he wrote his Gospel; and this, one would think, he had so effectually done in the very beginning of it, that no one ever after should have reviv'd that execrable Heresie: But yet to the Grief and Scandal of all true Christians we have seen it done in more ancient Days by the *Photinians*, and by the *Socinians* in ours, who by strained, forced, and unnatural Senses of the sacred Scriptures, have corrupted that Faith which is so plainly taught in them. And we must be all of us sensible, what injury they, by their false and pernicious Glosses, have done to our common Christianity, inasmuch as the greatest

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Libertines, and those of no Principles or Religion have appeared very zealous Advocates for *Socinianism*; and the Truth of it is, we cannot but say, they have their Ends and Accounts in it. For were the Doctrines of the Trinity, the Incarnation and Satisfaction of Christ, as they are taught in the Holy Scriptures, and have been believed by the Orthodox in all Ages, but once exploded as false and absurd, then is there an End of all, especially revealed Religion; and things are just as such Atheists, Deists, and Infidels would have them.

So that this being, without any aggravation of the matter (as we all know) our present unhappy Case, and the State of Religion among us, how needful is it that we earnestly contend for the whole Faith as it was once delivered to the Saints, and be very active and industrious for the Defence and Propagation of it? And there ought we to take our Aim, and exert out utmost Endeavours, where all the Enemies of Religion and Christianity do unite, and without a more than ordinary Application, how can we ever think to defend our selves against those Enemies, who by falling in with Men's corrupt Lusts, do make themselves sure even of great Success against us? So that all we can do is absolutely
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necessary, and we cannot but think our selves concern'd both to understand and vindicate the Reasons of our Faith, and to answer all those Objections, which by Deists, Hereticks, or Infidels can be made against it. This is our proper Work and Business, and all fit Seasons and Opportunities should we wisely make use of to undeceive the mistaken and erroneous.

And it being not only Endeavour, but the joint Endeavours of all Christians, which the Apostle here recommends; we are obliged to strive together for the Faith of the Gospel, as our common Cause and Interest; and which ought to be heartily espoused by all that love and profess it. And will we but add Zeal to our Endeavours, there will be doubtless most vigorous Efforts in so good and laudable a Work. And why should not we, who are possessed of the Truth, shew as much Zeal for the Defence of it, as its Enemies do for their gross Errours, and most dangerous Mistakes? It is very evident, and must be observed by us all, that with great Boldness and Assurance, and with no less Scorn and Contempt they have attacked the Christian Faith in one of the most important Articles of it; which highly derogates from the Honour and Dignity of our Saviour: And as it takes away the Sacri-

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fice of his most meritorious Death for the Expiation of our Sins, renders our Hopes of Salvation, not only uncertain and precarious, but vain and groundless.

This therefore should animate our Zeal, and quicken our Diligence in countermineing the Designs of such subtle and dangerous Adversaries. For be it so, that we have the plainest Truth, and the best Cause in the World: Yet if we do not make it appear by proper Proofs and Evidence; if we do not by *being instant in season, and out of season*, and laying hold on all opportunities, assert and maintain it, we must be said to be wanting to our selves, and to that Faith for which we are to strive together not being terrified by our Adversaries. Which brings me to my

Fourth and last Head of Discourse, which is, That there be Courage and Resolution against all the Enemies and Opposers of it.

Courage to do our Duties, or a religious Fortitude, is a most needful Qualification of a good Soldier and Servant of Jesus Christ. For never was there any greater Opposition against any person or Thing, that appeared in the World, than there was against him and his Holy Religion. As it disannulled the temporary Rites of the *Mosaic* Law, and was so contrary to the Religion of

the Idolatrous Gentiles in whom the Government of the World then was, it was sure to meet with (as it did) from both, the greatest Opposition; yet through God's Blessing on the Courage and Resolution of the Professors of it, weak and defenceless as they were, did it prevail ; and so will it be still, be there but the same religious Fortitude in the Conduct and Management of its true Interests. But that this Virtue may have its full force upon us, it is necessary that we serve God in the Integrity of our Hearts ; and that the Works of Religion be in truth and sincerity our business. And when this is, we shall be brave and magnanimous in the Defence and Services of it ; we shall meet, and even despise all the Danger that the doing our Duties, can expose us to ; and to this virtuous and heroick Resolution (will we keep innocence) ought we to raise our Minds and be above all the Terrours of our Adversaries.

Work enough are we sure to have ; inasmuch as to oppose Vice vigorously, and to countermin all the Depths and Devices of *Satan* (who is always doing us great mischief) will require all the Powers that we have ; nay more, that all our Trust and Confidence be in God. And if ever we can promise our selves his Blessing ; it will be

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upon such pious and wise Designs; such honest and hearty Endeavours; and to encourage us to be well resolved against the Opposition of all our Enemies, we have a Faith and Religion that will bear the Test of *all* that Vice or Infidelity can say against it. We have the greatest Evidence of Truth imaginable; and are sure that it came from God; and through him has it triumphed over many great Powers combin'd together for its Subversion.

So that are we but firmly persuaded of the Truth of it in our Minds, and our Lives, as becomes the Dignity of the Gospel; if there be among our selves but sincere Love and Concord; and a firm Union; and have we but Zeal and Industry for its Propagation, and are Resolute and Courageous against all the Enemies and Opposers of it: What may we not hope? Or what can we have to fear? When this is the Frame and Disposition of our Minds; and true Religion in its Power and Efficacy doth possess and govern our Souls; and when we are in this manner strong, how will God more and more Strengthen and Assist us!

Thus have I dispatched, what at first I proposed to insist upon; and have enforced those means which the Apostle in my Text prescribes for

for the Support and Preservation of any Church professing true Religion. Which having so brought to your Remembrance ; I come in the last place to make some Application of them as is Suitable to our selves, and the present Occasion.

It is, I well know, my Reverend Brethren, a great and solemn Service, to which I am this day called ; being to speak before so learned and venerable an Assembly : But the things I have offered to your Consideration, are of such use, and so much concern us, as the Ministers of Religion, and of a Church teaching it in Truth and Purity ; that whilst I apply them, I promise myself not only your Candour, but your Concurrence with me.

We are all of us sensible, and must own, that what is at all times the duty of all Christians, is not *less* ours, who are God's more immediate Servants, and ought in all Piety and Goodness to be exemplary.

And as to the first of these things I have insisted upon ; *Holine/s*, or such a Conversation as becomes the Dignity of the Gospel ; it is what by many indispensable Ties we are obliged unto ; in as much as what is the End and Design of Religion in all the Professors of it, ought to have its more *perfect work* on us. Ours is, as all know,

know, a most sacred Function: And of great Consequence, therefore is it, that we endeavour to live up to the dignity of it: For however mean and despicable, the Prophane and Wicked may esteem it; yet is it altogether without cause: For since it is universally acknowledged, that greatness of Employment doth dignifie Men, and that they are estimated according to the Nature and Excellency of their Offices; surely ours for its *work sake*, may put in its claim for some kind of respect and esteem. ^{1 Theff. 13.} Highly was it accounted ^{13.} of both among the *Jews* and *Heathens*, at all Times, and in all Places of the World; And as its Services do relate to the most high God; and the Soul is by far more noble and excellent than the Body; and the Rewards and Enjoyments of Eternity, are upon all accounts infinitely preferable to any we have here; it cannot in reason be supposed that that Profession which is employ'd about things of such everlasting Consequence, can be inferiour to any whatever. But then the more eminent it is, and the more it excels any other; the greater Obligation is there on us, by a Suitable and becoming Behaviour to adorn it; and if to this, in order to the doing good, all in Magistracy, in publick Offices and Employments are strictly obliged; then more especially

especially on us, to whom the Direction and Trust of holy things is committed, is this a necessary part of duty : For as under the Law it was required of them that ministered about holy things that they should be holy, and by their dedication were look'd upon as such; God saying
 Lev. 10. 3. expressly when he speaks of the Priests, *That he will be Sanctified of all them that draw near him, and before all the People will be glorified*: So is it now also required under the Evangelical Dispensation, that all such who are consecrated to Holy Offices, should be both inwardly and outwardly holy: and that such Holiness, or Purity of Heart and Life is an indispensable Qualification for us who are employed in the Ministry of the Gospel, is plain from the Epistles of S. Paul to Timothy and Titus. Where we have a full account of all the Duties belonging to our sacred
 1 Tim. 3. 15. Function; *how we should behave our selves in the House of God*: among which this is especially enjoined; that such who have that Charge upon them, should be *exemplary in Word, in Conversation in Charity, in Spirit, in Faith, and in Purity*. And when there is a true Love of God in our Hearts, and an awful Sense of him on our Minds, there will be such a Zeal in us for his Honour and Service, as will (through his assistance) carry us

up to that Goodness and Sanctity, which is required of us ; and make us do those things which are for the Credit and Reputation of the Doctrines we profess to believe and teach: And this is upon all Accounts needful for us now to have a principal Regard to, considering the present State of our Affairs, and how it is with us.

For though we have a Religion agreeable to Scripture, and Antiquity, beyond any whatever ; and our Church be in its Faith and Doctrine Apostolical, in its Government and Orders Primitive, in its Rites and Ceremonies comely and decent, in its Liturgy and Publick Offices of Worship grave and pious, and in all Respects fitted to make Men good and happy both in this Life, and that which is to come: Yet how is this Excellent Primitive and Apostolical Church envied and reproached ! How is it scorned, contemned, and censured as Unchristian ! And how, alas ! With Grief do I speak it, are Men divided from it ! as if they had no sense what Christian Communion is, or what was the Evil of Schism and Separation.

Though free as it is both from Superstition and Enthusiasm, and in which pure and undefiled Religion is so perfectly taught: Yet what

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Out-cries and Clamours have its Enemies most
 causelessly raised against it! And though why, or
 wherefore, we cannot say; yet is this our present
 unhappy Case, and such an evil Spirit is there
 gone out against us. As for those of the Church
 of *Rome*, so depraved and corrupted are they
 both in Faith and Worship; that there's no Hope,
 no Possibility of Peace or Reconciliation with
 them. But as for our Protestant Brethren, who
 agree with us in matters of Faith, and the Belief
 of all things necessary to Salvation; from them
 we might have hoped, we might have expected
 other and better things: But since from them also
 we have had such Hatred and Scorn; and our
 Church so much envied by the *Romanists*, and
 admired by the Reformation abroad, has had so
 much Contempt poured in upon it: Let us who
 are the Ministers thereof, take a most especial
 Care that we be not blamed for these things;
 and that it does not suffer shame or reproach in
 our Accounts; either by our Lives or Conversa-
 tions, as to moral or religious Duties; or through
 our Carelessness and negligent performing of
 Offices and Ministrations: Let us so demean
 our selves that it may never be said of any of us
 as of the Sons of *Ely*, that they did by their In-

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pieties, or scandalous Behaviour, render themselves vile before all the Assembly, and caused them to abhor the Offerings of the Lord. No! Neither this, nor any thing like it, so much to the Dishonour of God, will ever, I trust, be laid to the Charge of the Ministers of our Church; where, without the Imputation of being either vain or partial; I hope, I may truly say, that there is as learned and pious a Clergy, and in the midst of a profane and degenerate Age, as many burning and shining Lights, and as great Examples of all that is laudable and praise-worthy as any Church ever had; who having inclinations to things truly noble and good, do make God's Glory and Service their aim and end; and are as much above the Impotencies of humane Nature, as in this frail and imperfect State can be expected. But here again have we just matter of complaint; that though we are but Men, and are subject to the same Frailties and Passions with all others, yet we have not the same candid Allowances for our Weaknesses and Imperfections: Men being in their Censures so unjust and severe, as oftentimes unduly to aggravate the smallest Defects and Miscarriages, not only to the Blame of those that are faulty, but, which

is still more rigorous, to the Imputation of our whole Church and Order ; not considering that there was a *Judas* among the Twelve Apostles, and even in their days false Apostles, and false Teachers.

But however unreasonable, Men through prejudice and disaffection, either to us or Religion, may be ; whatever they may say or think : Let it be our Care to deserve better ; and that we never be a Reproach to our Church or Function ; nor justly a Scorn or Derision even to those, who have evil Will at us.

But, secondly, further, not only as an Eminent Part of Religion, but also as what the Welfare and Interest of our Church requires of us, let there be sincere Love and Union among us ; and let us alway be at peace within our selves : For if we of the Clergy should be so unreasonably, and beyond measure transported, as to quarrel, defame and asperse one another ; what a blemish, and mischief would this be to all Religion ! and how in our particular Interests must we all suffer by it ! how would this shew most ungoverned Passions ! and that God's Glory and the Good of his Church was not, and could not be our principal Aim ! in as much as in such kind

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of ways there is a peculiar Turpitude and Deformity! What an Obstruction and Hindrance would this be, to the Great and Noble Designs of Religion! for Men set apart for the Ministers of it, for Men of one and the same Profession, and linked together in one common Cause and Interest, to be maligning one anothers Gifts and Endowments! how greatly unbecoming the Dignity of the Gospel would it be, for those who minister about holy things, either by virulent Invectives, or by Detraction and Slander, to be blasting one anothers Credit and Reputation! No, this would be highly unworthy and misbecoming: This would be strangely to forget our selves; and greatly to disserve our common Interests, and that of God and his Church; and would give a just occasion to our Enemies to despise us all; and not only so, but Religion also, for our sakes; when they saw, that instead of the contrary Qualities so conducing to the Honour and Service of our Church, we despised, lessened, and vilified one another. This, as it is against the Genius of Religion, so must I needs say, would discover a strange littleness of Mind, and a most undue Estimate of things; far below the Character impressed upon us, for us who

who are so nearly allied, and concerned in the same common Designs of doing good, to envy one anothers Acquisitions; be they of Fortune, Learning, Knowledge, Reputation, or any the most becoming Christian Graces and Vertues.

This is contrary to that Wisdom which is from above; and to that love, which is the Bond and Tye of all Christian Communion, and is an Eminent Branch of the Divine Life and Nature. Of this therefore let us all beware, for by all the odious Names, and Characters, we fix upon one another, we do (whatever we may think when our Passions are up) not only blemish and lessen our selves, but do the greatest mischief imaginable to our sacred Profession; and give such advantage to our Enemies, that not only they, who are such to our Church and Religion, but the profane and debauched Scoffers at all will even triumph at it.

But thirdly, and lastly, when there is Love and Amity, Concord and Union among our selves; when we are of one Heart, and one Mind, and of the same kind Affections to one another; then will there be most probably, not only endeavour but joint-Endeavours in us for
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the Service of God and Religion; and then will those spiritual Gifts he has given us, be so stirr'd up, as to make us active and industrious for the Advancement of Divine Truth, resolute and couragious against all the Enemies and Opposers of it.

And had it not been alway so from the beginning, we might well wonder, that a Religion so truly Evangelical, so perfective of our Natures, and so conducive to our present and future Happiness, as that we profess, is, and a Church so strictly enjoining the indispensable Necessity of an Holy Life in order to Salvation, as ours does, should have so many and such irreconcilable Enemies; but it being undeniably so, and an Evil that *Satan* has raised up against us, the more incumbent it is on us to oppose Vice strenuously; to maintain Truth, Peace, and Order; to confute solidly Schism and Heresie; and do what in us lies to put to *silence the Ignorance of foolish and unreasonable Men*. For we being in a peculiar manner God's Servants, very much Diligence and Application is required from us; and both the Names by which we are called in Holy Scripture, and the Descriptions there made of us do imply, not only Dignity,

- nity, but also that there are peculiar Duties belonging to our sacred Function, and that there is special Business, Work and Labour, that we must be careful and industrious about: And the
- ¹ Tim. 3. Church being called *God's House or Family*, and
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 Tit. 1. 7. the Priests styled the *Stewards of it*; this does suppose great Care, and Diligence, in doing the Offices of it; and when *we are* else-where called
- ² Cor. 5. *God's Embassadors*, how does this, though a
^{20.} Character of Respect, and Esteem, require from all on whom it is fixt, utmost Application for maintaining their Master's Honour and Dignity, and great Faithfulness in negotiating his Business: and when by the same Apostle we are said to be
- ¹ Cor. 3. 9. *Labourers together with God*; what less doth this import, but that we must execute all his Designs, and most studiously advance his Kingdom and Interest in the Hearts and Lives of Men?

And when we are, as in other Places called *Shepherds, Watchmen, and God's Messengers*, what less from the known Use of the Words is implied than Labour and Work, and such as requires great Diligence and Fidelity? that it is our constant Business to instruct Men in the Ways of Truth? and by watching all Opportunities to reclaim them from Sin and Errour? to feed them

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with the Word of God, which is the Bread of Life? To observe their ways, and warn them of their Dangers, and to declare unto them faithfully God's Will; how, and by what means they are to be saved? And from that grave, pious, and most weighty Charge given us by the Bishop when we were ordained Priests, and never to be forgotten by us, it is evident, as the sense of our own Church, that Labour and Industry belong to our Profession; and that to the Work thereof we are to attend with great Application.

So that we see from many Obligations our indispensable Duty, who are God's special Servants and Ministers, to labour in his Work most faithfully; to express great Zeal for promoting his Glory; to exhort and convince Gain-sayers; and how, and in what manner we are to spoil and overcome all the Powers that are combined against God and his Church.

And in order to this most Excellent End, so worthy of us, let us as St. Paul advises, *Take heed to our selves, that there be in us an holy Fear,* 1 Tim. 4. 16. and Reverence of God, and that this inward Frame and Disposition of Mind, be alway express'd by a grave and sober Behaviour; That we be sincere and real in all that we profess and say; and that we do things so worthy and be-

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Matt. 10.

coming our Character, as to procure us a true Esteem, having what our Saviour recommended to the Apostles when he sent them out to preach the Gospel, both the *Innocency of the Dove*, and the *Wisdom of the Serpent*. For in the Age we now live in, where there are such Enemies to our Church and Holy Faith; it is not Integrity alone, without great Prudence, that will set us above Calumny, and Reproach.

1 Cor. 4. 3.

But when we speak that which is good; and do that which is honest, live as becomes our Profession, doing the Duties of it, with great Wisdom, Sedulity, and Diligence; then will the Contempt of the Scornful and Irreligious little affect us; *it being but a small thing, as St. Paul says,*

1 Theff. 2. 4.

with us, to be judged of Man's Judgment, when we can in Truth and Sincerity, appeal to God for our Fidelity; and whilst the End of our Labours and Designs is God's Glory in the Salvation of the Souls under our Charge and Care, and we live and speak *not as pleasing Men but God*, we shall be above the Censures of the Ignorant and Unworthy, and despise all that the Vain or Uncharitable can say against us.

We have all of us upon many Accounts great reason to be zealous for the Welfare and Prosperity of our Church and Religion: And nothing

at any time should discourage our Endeavours for its Honour and Service; nor, be our Enemies who they will, make us less couragious against all their Oppositions; But now, at this time, when, blessed be God! we have so glorious and pious a Head of our Church, and such a Defender of the Faith; Her great Example cannot surely, but hugely animate us to the Duties and Services of it; and we cannot but hope whilst we have such an Ornament as well as Defender, such an Earnest and Pledge of God's Favour and Protection, that he will more and more espouse our Cause and Interests.

And therefore that her most Excellent Majesty (whom God long preserve!) may to the Joy and Delight of her Soul, see true Religion in Power and Purity flourish in her Days, let us in our Places and Stations co operate with all her pious Designs and Endeavours, and through God's Help so live, as nothing that we shall say or do, may ever bring Dishonour to our Holy Religion; but on the contrary, that Men seeing our good Works, a most sincere Piety, and unaffected Devotion and Goodness in us; may glorifie God, the Giver of every good and perfect Gift; and we thereby be set above the Scorn and Contempt of the Schismatical, Profane, and Wicked.

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What now remains? But that we devoutly offer up unto God our Praises for all the Spiritual and Temporal Mercies we do enjoy; and with them our humblest Supplications, that he would alway bless this Church of *England*, with a pious and learned Clergy; which may bring Honour to him and their Sacred Function; and that he would so enable and sanctifie us the present Ministers thereof, that we may in all things be worthy of our Holy Calling, to the Comfort of our own Souls, the Edification of his Church and to the Glory of the Ever-blessed Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three Persons and one God; To whom be ascribed as most due, Honour, Power, Might, Majesty and Dominion both now and for ever. *Amen.*



F I N I S.